

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MILAN 2038

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINR, IT

SUBJECT: SOCIALIST PARTY DEVELOPMENTS.

GIORGIO GANGI, PSI VICE PRESIDENT OF THE LOMBARDY REGION
MET WITH CONGEN SEPT 15. HIS ACCOUNT OF THE SITUATION
FOLLOWS:

1. GANGI DESCRIBES HIMSELF AS A CLOSE FRIEND OF PSI SECRETARY CRAXI AND OF MILANS SOCIALIST MAYOR TOGNOLI. THEY HAD ALL COME INTO THE SOCIALIST PARTY TOGETHER, HE SAID, AT THE TIME OF THE UPRISING IN HUNGARY AND THEY HAD VERY SIMILAR VIEWS ABOUT RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SOVIET UNION.
2. ACCORDING TO GANGI, CRAXI IS PRETTY FIRMLY IN THE SADDLE AND THE CHANCE OF THE OLD GUARD REGAINING ITS CONTROL IS NOT VERY GREAT. IT WAS TIME, HE SAID, THAT DE MARTINO AND LOMBARDI SHOULD STEP ASIDE. THEY PARTY WANTED NEW LEADERSHIP. AND WHILE CRAXI'S COMING TO POWER WAS A LOT MORE SUDDEN THAN HAD GENERALLY BEEN FORESEEN, IT WAS CERTAINLY WHAT THE NATIONAL LEADERSHIP WANTED. CRAXI HAD BEEN CHOSEN IN LARGE PART BECAUSE HE HAS INTERNATIONAL STATURE. IF THE SOCIALIST PARTY WERE TO SURVIVE AND TO PLAY A SIGNIFICANT ROLE, IT HAD TO DRAW CLOSER TO THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTIES IN THE REST OF EUROPE AND TO HAVE THEIR SUPPORT. CRAXI WAS THE PRINCIPAL MEMBER OF THE PSI WHO HAD THOSE CONTACTS AND WAS KNOWN ABROAD.

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3. IN GANGI'S VIEW, THE PSI WAS MAKING A CHANGE IN ORIENTATION. IT HAD MADE A MAJOR MISTAKE IN BEING SO CLOSELY ALIGNED WITH THE COMMUNISTS. NOW IT WAS TURNING AWAY TOWARD AN INDEPENDENT POSITION WHICH WAS ITS ONLY HOPE FOR SURVIVAL. HE THOUGHT THAT VIEW WAS PRETTY GENERALLY ACCEPTED BY THE YOUNGER LEADERSHIP, IN LOMBARDY AT LEAST. THE AUTONOMIST FACTION OF THE PARTY WAS DOMINANT IN LOMBARDY WITH TOGNOLI AS MAYOR OF MILAN, HIMSELF AS VICE PRESIDENT OF THE REGION AND CRAXI HEADING THE PARTY IN ROME. THAT MEANT THAT THEY HAD AN INTEREST IN MAKING CONCILIATORY MOVES TO OTHER FACTIONS OF THE PARTY TO KEEP IT TOGETHER. THIS EXPLAINED THE DECISION TO BACK GABRIELE BACCALINI FOR REGIONAL SECRETARY TO SUCCEED POLLI WHO HAD BEEN ELECTED SENATOR. BACCALINI, SAID GANGI, IS A DE MARTINIANO BUT IS ONE WITH WHOM THE AUTONONISTS THINK THEY CAN WORK. IN FACT, THE WHOLE SPECTRUM OF THE PSI IN MILAN WAS PRETTY WELL AGREED THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT THE CRAXI SECRETARYSHIP SHOULD SUCCEED.

4. WHAT WAS NEEDED NOW WAS TIME TO WORK OUT THE TRANSITION. FOR THAT REASON, THE ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT WAS VERY IMPORTANT. CERTAINLY THE PSI WANTED IT TO SURVIVE FOR A GOOD LONG TIME SINCE IT PROVIDED THE RESPITE REQUIRED TO PUT THE SOCIALIST HOUSE IN ORDER. THE MAIN PROBLEM FOR THE LEADERSHIP WAS HOW TO SWING THE RANK AND FILE INTO A POSITION OF GREATER INDEPENDENCE FROM THE COMMUNISTS. THAT WOULD HAVE TO BE DONE WITH GREA CARE TO AVOID DEFECTIONS TO THE COMMUNISTS. AND THAT WAS GOING TO REQUIRE SOME TIME. BUT AS FAR AS GANGI WAS CONCERNED, THERE WAS N QUESTION BUT THAT THE SOCIALIST PARTY WAS HEADED AWAY FROM ITS PREVIOUS CLOSENESS TO THE COMMUNISTS. NOR WAS HE AFRAID THAT THE DC WOULD COME TO TERMS WITH THE COMMUNISTS BEFORE THE SOCIALISTS WERE ABLE TO RETURN TO AN ALLIANCE WITH THE DC AND THE MINOR PARTIES.

5. GANGI CONFIRMED THAT CRAXI HAS NOW BEEN DIAGNOSED AS A DIABETIC. (THAT HAD BEEN RUMORED AT THE TIME OF CRAXI'S COLLAPSE AT THE END OF THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN WHEN HE WAS HOSPITALIZED). AS A RESULT, SAID GANGI, CRAXI HAS COMPLETELY CHANGED HIS WAY OF LIFE. HE USED TO BE A TRENCHERMAN WHO WORKED INTO THE SMALL HOURS OF THE MORNING AND WHO LOVED THE GOOD LIFE. BUT NOW HE IS SUFFICIENTLY DETERMINED TO

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SUCCEED AS SECRETARY OF THE PARTY THAT HE IS DISCIPLINING HIS WORK HABITS AND HIS DIET TO LIVE WITH HIS HEALTH PROBLEM, ACCORDING TO GANGI.FINA

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